

# DNREC Division of Parks & Recreation's economic impact study for Delaware state parks praised at Tower 3 lighting ceremony

**LEWES** – Against the backdrop of the ceremonial lighting of the World War Two-era Tower 3 at Delaware Seashore State Park, Governor John Carney, DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin and other officials today lauded the positive economic impact DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation has in Delaware. Gov. Carney announced the results of the [first-ever independent economic impact study of Delaware's 16 state parks](#).

The study, conducted by Rockport Analytics, shows that in FY2016, nearly \$400 million was generated by out-of-state park visitors, with spending assessed at about \$245 per visitor on various goods and services in the state.

"The economic impact of our state parks on our economy is tremendous," said Gov. Carney. "Our state parks provide Delawareans and visitors with fun things to do, but also support nearly 6,700 full and part-time jobs across the state and made a significant contribution to state and local taxes. We are proud of our state parks and their positive impact on the economy and quality of life in Delaware."

The [study](#) also shows that:

- For every dollar of operating general fund tax dollar support state parks receive, \$40 was returned in economic activity. That is more than the return of neighboring states, including Maryland (\$18), Virginia (\$13), and Pennsylvania (\$12).

- If there were no Delaware state parks system, each Delaware household would need to pay an average of \$151 in additional state and local taxes in order to maintain current levels of tax receipts.
- In 2016, nearly \$53 million in state and local taxes were generated by the parks system, including \$12 million in hotel taxes, \$4.7 million in income taxes and \$9.5 million in property taxes.

“These statistics support our belief that our parks are a significant economic engine for Delaware,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “The figures show that every time someone visits a state park, they are not only enjoying Delaware’s recreational opportunities, but they are also contributing to the state’s economy. Every dollar the State invests comes back by a multiple of 40 in economic activity in Delaware. Most importantly, parks visitors can be assured that they are supporting all of the amazing programs that our parks provide.”

Tower 3 is one of the landmark concrete WWII-era fire towers used for Delaware’s coastal defense. During the announcement, nine cobalt lights surrounding the tower at the park were lit, the color intended to match the lights on the Indian River Bridge, and to help birds navigate around them.

Ten years in the making, the restoration of Tower 3 was a partnership among the Fort Miles Historical Association, the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation and DNREC’s Division of Parks & Recreation. The foundation provided \$130,000 in startup funds, while the association provided the manpower with its “Bunker Busters” cleanup crew. The \$60,000 restoration includes new pavement and the large lights around the base of the tower.

The foundation seeks to raise more funds to complete the restoration project; members officially kicked off a fundraising campaign during the event. Members were recently

informed by the Longwood Foundation that it will provide a \$130,000 matching grant to continue restoration efforts. The foundation now aims to raise another \$300,000 to install a staircase inside the tower to provide further access for the public.

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